

BRUCE ANSWERS
SCEPTIC KNOWLES

Sends Gas Investigation Committee Supplemental Report.

COMMITTEE REPLY TO REPORT

Rough Draft Has Been Agreed Upon—Will Soon Be in Council's Hands.

The special committee to investigate the city gas works, which has been for so long wrestling with the heavy duties imposed upon it, has at last completed its labors.

After the meeting held last night in the City Hall there remains nothing more to do but for Chairman Morton to dictate to the stenographer the final report to be submitted to the Council, the rough draft of which was agreed to in executive session.

The report will be printed and distributed to members of the Council before it is submitted in regular session of the body. This will be done under a resolution authorizing such procedure, passed at a recent meeting of the Common Council.

The committee, in executive session last night, also considered a supplemental report from Expert Howard Bruce, of New York, which each member had already read.

This finished the business of the evening and of what may be the last meeting of the special Gas Investigation Committee.

Supplemental Report.

The supplemental report of Expert Bruce, with a copy of the correspondence between him and Superintendent Knowles, given below, is very interesting matter. Mr. Bruce says:

No. 4 Irving Place, New York, January 6, 1906.

Mr. W. W. Knowles, Chairman of Gas Works, Richmond, Va.

My Dear Sir:—I am in possession of a recent statement submitted to you by the committee by the superintendent of the City Gas Works, and relating to certain portions of my recent report.

At the time of my external examination of this meter, certain of the inner moving parts were found to be out of order, and a small indication that overhauling would be out of order, especially so since the meter had not been tested at the same price.

The chief value of temperature correction is that it places daily manufacturing results upon a comparable basis. The chief value of temperature correction is that it places daily manufacturing results upon a comparable basis.

In compiling yearly statements of cost, the increase or decrease in the stock of coal, oil, coke, tar and other material properly classified under the heading of "Materials and Supplies" should be taken into account.

Your inventories in addition to these items include engines, boilers, pumps, governors and other permanent fixtures. We were fully advised as to the reasons for entering the item of coke in 1902 at 10c per bushel.

The stock of coke was entered in the same inventory at its normal price of \$3.08 per ton, and, further, that all coal was purchased in the month of December, 1902, at the same price. Since the purchase price of coal was normal, and the stock entered at this price, we could not reasonably expect an increase above the normal value of the coke.

Consequently omitted from our tables the changes in inventory values, calling attention to this fact, so that yourself or anyone else, in arriving at conclusions, could make due allowance for such omission.

Street Lighting.

If the figure of 731 street lamps, as named in your 1904 annual report, reported to the committee, is correct, the date of the report, and not the average number, my statement is in error to the extent of 51 lamps; the result of the error being to make the total cost for this service in the month of \$35 to \$36.

Your annual report for 1904 charges the city and school department with an amount from \$28 to \$30 per lamp per year for the gas burned. The cost of lighting and maintaining these lamps, heretofore covered by a separate department, and not charged to the Gas Department, amounts to from \$7 to \$8 per lamp per year, making a total cost for this service in the month of \$35 to \$36.

From a discussion with your superintendent regarding the rapid increase in the figured costs during the past recent months, it would seem likely that the cost figures for the three years in question would eventually equal or exceed those named in my report. The propriety of including a charge for depreciation and one for office rental, etc., is so well understood as to need no argument.

General Statement Relating to Superintendent's Recommendations and Comparison of Results Between the Years 1894 and 1904.

In connection with this statement, which establishes your superintendent's reputation for far-sightedness, or would state that I have not considered myself called upon to investigate your superintendent with a view of vindictive him, nor with a view of criticizing him. I consequently have no remarks to make.

Leakage.

I consider eighteen per cent. (18 per cent.) of leakage as high, no matter whether the same represents 5c or 7c per 1,000 cubic feet of gas sold.

Quality of Gas.

Our tests of candle-power showed a variation between maximum and minimum of eight candles. If this candle-power could be kept uniform in the middle of the summer, I very seriously question its uniformity during the winter months.

My Statement in Regard to Changes in Purifiers Was Used on Information Obtained at the Works.

If the information did not come directly from your superintendent, it was because I did not happen to remember at the time the question was asked. All candle-power tests were taken from street mains. It so happens, however, that the tests were taken before entering the mains, consequently the note in regard to filling the holder with water gas was made to show the cause of the high candle-power at that particular time.

Services.

Statement in regard to the inadequacy of service pipes being due to increase of consumption is undoubtedly, to a large extent, true. It does not, however, touch upon the fact that the department has continued to lay services smaller than the minimum size generally adopted.

Meters.

The statement quotes my report as stating that "meters are not removed and tested," whereas my report states "meters are not removed for length of service, and are tested in a crude manner." There is a considerable difference

between the two statements.

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